

FBI Is Ordered To Answer to Wiretap Charge

From News Dispatches

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LAS VEGAS, Nev., June 21 — A Nevada Judge today ordered the FBI and the Central Telephone Co. to reply within 20 days to charges that they collaborated in an eavesdropping and wiretapping operation against Las Vegas gamblers.

The order came down as State Judge John Mowbray refused to dismiss suits for \$4.5 million that have been filed against the phone company and four agents of the FBI.

The suits were brought by Edward Levinson, a 66-year-old gambler, and by the Fremont Hotel. Levinson is board chairman at the Fremont, one of the large gambling casinos here. He is also a former business associate of Robert G. (Bobby) Baker, who served as Senate Majority Secretary until his resignation in 1963.

Levinson has accused the FBI agents of "bugging" the telephone in his office between October, 1962, and April, 1963, through an arrangement with the Central Telephone Co.

Lines were leased for "bugging" purposes by the agents, who Levinson claims operated behind a front called the "Henderson Novelty Co." The address for Henderson Novelty was identical to the FBI address in Las Vegas.

Until now, the Federal Government has neither confirmed nor denied Levinson's charge. But as a result of Mowbray's order today, an admission or denial of the charges must be given within 20 days after it is requested by Levinson's attorneys.

In the meantime, Levinson's lawyers, including Edward Bennett Williams of Washington, can proceed with the taking of depositions from phone company officials and from the FBI agents who are accused of taking part in the "bugging" operation.

Levinson's suit is based on claims of conspiracy and invasion of privacy. He has demanded, in addition to damages, that any tape recording made during the "bugging" operation be returned to him and that the court prohibit any further invasions of his privacy by the FBI and the phone company.